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Mr. Cassin read a "Description of a new rapacious Bird in the collection of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia." Referred to Messrs, Harris, Townsend, and Gambel.

Dr. Morton read "A description of Fossil Remains from the Eocene green sand of South Carolina. By Robert W. Gibbes, M. D.;" which was referred to Drs. Morton, Wilson and Leidy.

Dr. Leidy communicated an observation which he had made in the human adult subject, of the existence of a *spiculum of bone* developed between the lamina of the dura mater, just over the point at which the *trigeminus nerve* pierces that membrane, the purpose of which he supposes to be, to protect the nerve from pressure as it passes over the superior edge of the petrous portions of the temporal bone to join the Casserian ganglion.

Mr. Phillips offered the following, which was adopted :

Resolved, That a copy of the Journal of the Academy, as far as can be spared, be transmitted to Mr. Moricand, of Geneva, in exchange for several numbers of his 'Plants of Brazil, lately presented to the Academy.

On motion of Mr. Gambel, *Resolved*, That the Publication Committee be authorized to commence the publication of a new series of the Journal of the Academy, in quarto form.

Meeting for Business, April 27, 1847.

VICE PRESIDENT MORTON in the Chair.

The Committee on Dr. Gibbes' paper describing fossil remains from the Eocene green sand of South Carolina, reported in favour of publication in the forthcoming number of the Journal of the Academy.

The Committee on M. Cassin's paper read at last meeting reported in favour of publication.

*Description of a new rapacious Bird in the Museum of the Academy of
Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.*

BY JOHN CASSIN.

Genus CYMINDIS, Cuvier.

CYMINDIS *Wilsonii*, Nobis. ♂. Body above entirely dark brown, palest on the head, beneath white; every feather from chin to under tail coverts crossed by several bars of bright rufous chesnut, and these colours extending upwards into a collar around the neck; fourth, fifth and sixth primaries longest and nearly equal, external webs nearly black, internal webs of outer primaries white at base and for nearly half their length, the remaining part reddish inclining to chesnut, every primary (on its inner web) having two irregularly shaped black marks and tipped with black. Tail of the same colour as the back but paler, white at base, and crossed by about four broad bars which are nearly black, the second bar from the tip accompanied by a narrow rather indistinct bar of rufous; tip of tail narrowly edged with white. Bill very large, (larger than in any other species of this genus,) yellowish white, inclining to bluish horn colour at base.

♀. Body above entirely slate colour, palest on the head, beneath barred with the same, the bars having a ferruginous tinge.

Total length of mounted specimen, from tip of bill to end of tail, 17 inches.

Hab. Island of Cuba.

The two specimens here described, were presented to the Academy by its esteemed member, Richard C. Taylor, Esq., the eminent Geologist, who has kindly favoured me with the following note and memorandum from his journal:

Philadelphia, April 5th, 1847.

DEAR SIR: I make the best reply in my power respecting the pair of Hawks, the skins of which and of other birds were brought by me from the Island of Cuba; but not being an Ornithologist, the very concise description that I can give of them may not be very intelligible nor useful.

The locality was towards the north-eastern part of the island, in the vicinity of the port of Gibara, in the province of Holguin. The range of country more especially traversed by me, during six months residence, extended from the sea coast to thirty miles inland, either into the savanna, or copper region of the mountains. I have particularly described this country in the Transactions of the Am. Phil. Society, vol. ix., pp. 204 to 218, where I have also given a reconnaissance map.

My journal contains a short note, made at the time these hawks were shot. My companion and myself saw this pair in company, hovering over the crest

of the high limestone mountain called La Silla, about seven miles from the coast: my attention was called to them by my companion, a resident of the island, who assured me they were extremely rare, and he hoped we should be able to shoot them; we were then on the peak of the mountain, and after a little chase, were so fortunate as to obtain both the male and female. My note is literally as follows:

"*Gabilan azul*, blue hawk of the Spaniards, male and female, very rare and difficult to shoot. Pupil black, with a greenish-yellow iris."

The food of these birds was stated to be various birds, of which doves were the most abundant on the spot, with perhaps an occasional relish of lizards, which were also abundant. I understood that these hawks frequented the most lofty and solitary peaks and were not often seen below. We considered ourselves extremely fortunate in the acquisition of this fine pair of birds.

Respectfully yours,

RICHARD C. TAYLOR.

Mr. John Cassin.

The bill in this species is very large in proportion to the size of the bird, and it agrees, moreover, tolerably well with the *written* description of *Falco magnirostris*, Gmelin,—so does the young *Cymindis uncanitus*, Illig. All authors, however, except Dr. Latham, clearly understood the *F. magnirostris* to be the bird figured in Enl. 464, which is a common South American species of the genus *Astur*.

Dr. Latham, in his article on *F. magnirostris*, Gen. His. vol. 1, p. 282, gives a description of a bird suspected by him to be the species intended by Gmelin, which applies very well to *Cymindis cayanensis*, Gm., in young plumage, but not to *C. Wilsonii*.

I have named this species in honor of Dr. Thomas B. Wilson, as a slight tribute to his merits as a man, and his munificence as a patron of Zoological science.

Remarks on the Birds observed in Upper California.

By WM. GAMBEL.

(Continued from page 158.)

PASSERES.

Lanius Ludovicianus, Linn. Loggerhead Shrike.

L. excubitoroides, Swains. Northern Zool. p. 115, pl. 34.

In the Shrikes we are presented with a group of birds closely allied to each other, and undergoing such changes in plumage as renders them difficult to discriminate. Although examined with great care by Swainson in the *Fauna*

Boreali-Americana, yet he appears to have laid too much stress upon characters subject to great variation, as size, relative length of quills and color.

The adult of the Loggerhead is a beautiful bird, and might well have been called *excubitoroides*, for the resemblance in colour and marking to the European *excubitor* is very great. Above, it is of a clear pearl grey colour with the upper tail coverts, and exterior edges of the scapulars, nearly pure white; beneath pure white; the quantity of white on the tail feathers varies, but generally is in proportion to the age of the bird.

The relative length of quills in the Shrikes is an uncertain character, and differs very much according to age. In the young of this species, the second quill is generally much shorter than the sixth, but in the adult, equals and may even exceed the sixth in length; the proportion of the third, fourth and fifth to each other is also exceedingly various, and indeed in each wing of the same bird it is very common to find the proportion of the quills differing very materially. This I have found to be the case in the European and both American species.

It is rather strange that this bird so abundant in the southern, western and north western portions of our country, should not be found in the middle and northern Atlantic States. In California it is very common.

Lanius septentrionalis, Gmel. Northern Shrike.

L. borealis, Vieill. Swains.

I found our Butcher Bird in the Californian ridge of mountains in November, but did not meet with it along the coast during summer, appearing to be replaced by the Loggerhead, which is a summer resident.

Perisoreus Canadensis, (Linn.) Bonap. Canada Jay.

We met with numbers of this plain and familiar bird in the Rocky mountains of the interior.

Cyanocorax Stelleri, (Pallas) Bonap. Steller's Jay.

This species is occasionally met with in the pine groves of the mountains from New Mexico to California.

Cyanocorax Californicus, (Vigors) Nobis. California Jay.

Garrulus Californicus, Vigors, Zool. Beechy's voyage.

G. ultramarinus, Aud. Nutt. non Bonap.

The California Jay has been hitherto confounded by American ornithologists with the Mexican *G. ultramarinus*, accurately described by Prince Bonaparte, in the Journal of this Society, in 1825, and afterwards described and figured also, by Temminck in his Planches colorées, 439. It is strange that the Prince himself should have committed the same error of confounding the two species in his Comparative list of the Birds of Europe and North America, quoting at the same time Audubon's plate and description, which is clearly the *Californicus*.

The distinctions between the two species are very considerable, and may be thus stated.

CYANOCORAX ULTRAMARINUS.

Much larger, 13 to 13½ inches in length.

Upper parts entirely blue; head and cheeks blue also, except space between the eye and bill which is black.

The blue extending down the sides of the neck, but without a pectoral band.

Throat only, whitish; all the rest of the under parts of a dirty brownish white, darker on the breast.

Length of wing 7 inches.

Tail nearly even, length 6¾ inches.

Tarsus 1¾ inches.

The *C. ultramarinus* by its greater size, blue colour above, and absence of pectoral band, together with its very different proportion, is easily distinguished from the *C. Californicus*, which is much smaller, has a brown back, a white superciliary line, and a dull white throat, and breast surrounded by a collar of blue.

The *G. sordidus*, Swains. (Syn. Bds. Mex.) generally quoted as a synonym of the *ultramarinus*, does not agree very well with it, unless the description were taken from a young bird, in which the tail is irregularly rounded, and the size somewhat less.

The California Jay is a very abundant species, and a constant resident. In its actions it is exceedingly restless, and at the same time sprightly and graceful, ever flitting from tree to tree, uttering a harsh grating *jay, jay*, and sometimes altering it to *kay ic, kay ic*. Like all the Jays, they are very fond of scolding, and a troop of them will surround and follow almost any object that attracts their attention, with their teasing disagreeable cries.

Pica Hudsonica (Sabine) Bonap. Common Magpie.

We frequently met with the Magpie on our route from New Mexico to California. It would linger around our camp to pick up the offal, and sometimes boldly steal the meat which was hung on the bushes around.

Pica Nuttallii, Aud. Nuttall's Magpie.

I felt great pleasure on arriving at Santa Barbara, in Upper California, in seeing in its native haunts, this distinct and beautiful Magpie, discovered by my friend, the indefatigable naturalist and traveller after whom it is named;

CYANOCORAX CALIFORNICUS.

Length 11½ to 12 inches.

Back brown. A broad line of white spots extending over the eye the length of the head, and with the space anterior to the eye and auriculars dusky.

A crescent of blue surrounds the upper part of the breast.

Throat and upper part of breast white, streaked with lines of dusky; all the rest beneath the collar of blue, brownish white.

Length of wing nearly 5 inches.

Tail graduated or much rounded, length 5¾ inches.

Tarsus 1½ inches.

among others, a just tribute for the invaluable services he has rendered to natural science, during more than thirty years of his life, spent among us, in untiring investigation of the productions of our country.

In California, at least, and where as yet I believe it has alone been found, this Magpie is exceedingly local, being confined, as far as I have observed, to the immediate neighborhood of Santa Barbara, where among the beautiful evergreen oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) of the vicinity, it is abundant.

Sprightly and graceful in its movements, it is a favorite with the inhabitants; and when not molested shows considerable confidence, often being seen about the doors of the houses, but becoming remarkably shy and cautious when chased or shot at. During my stay, from frequently shooting at them, although at first they were numerous in small flocks, they at length became so scarce that during the breeding season very few were to be seen, apparently having gone to the ravines of the neighboring mountains, so that I did not find a single recent nest, although the woods were full of those of the last year. The old nests were large, and built loosely of sticks like that of a crow, and situated in the topmost forks of the trees, well concealed by the foliage.

Corvus ossifragus, Wils. Fish Crow.

Abundant along the Pacific coast.

Corvus Americanus, Aud. Common Crow.

Also abundant throughout the Pacific coast, as well as in the interior.

Corvus californicus, Wagler. American Raven.

Fitted by its organization for any means of subsistence, there are few parts of North America where the Raven may not be found.

In the arid region between the Rio Colorado and California, its ominous croak renders the desert solitude more dismal, and on the rocky uninhabited Islands off the coast of California, it is the companion of the Fish-hawk and Gulls; but in California, instead of being scattered and solitary, it becomes one of the most abundant and familiar of birds, and in company with its fellow-scavengers, the Turkey vultures and dogs, it is exceedingly useful in consuming the refuse of the cattle which are slaughtered in such great numbers. At the Pueblo de los Angeles, so abundant were they in and around the town, that I have counted in the *corral*, or court yard of a single house, as many as 150 at one time.

Nucifraga Columbiana, (Wils.) Aud. American Nutcracker.

We occasionally met with this peculiar bird in the mountains of the interior, among the scattered pine groves.

Quiscalus major, Vieill. Boat-tailed Blackbird.

This large and handsome blackbird is very abundant about the Gulf, and occasionally is seen as far north as Upper California.

Scolopagus ferrugineus, (Wils.) Bire. Rusty Blackbird.

We found this species very common in New Mexico and California, as also

the *S. Mexicanus*, Swains. lately described and figured by Audubon as *Quiscalus Breweri*.

Sturnella neglecta, Aud. Western Meadow Lark.

This nearly allied species we found abundant on the prairies in New Mexico, Rio Colorado, and California. In the spring around the Pueblo de los Angeles its delicate and melodious song was every where to be heard. About Monterey in the winter it kept in and along the margins of the pine woods.

Molothrus pecorus, (Gmel.) Swains. Cow Blackbird.

Abundant, in company with the Rusty Blackbird, frequenting, in flocks, the cattle corrals and farm houses of New Mexico and California.

Icterus bullockii, Swains. Bullock's Oriole.

The males of this beautiful bird arrive at their summer quarters about the Pueblo de los Angeles and Santa Barbara, in California, about the first week in April, and the female in a week or so afterwards. They resort to the retired hedges of vineyards and orchards, and occasionally are seen among the trees in the town. Its song during this joyful season is uttered in a loud clear tone, and sometimes varied, but generally *wek te tek tshe-o tshe-o tshe-o, wek te tek tshe-o*. This is continued at intervals while flitting through the budding trees in search of their insect fare. When it observes any object of suspicion, it utters a few guttural croaking scolding notes, and conceals itself among the leafy boughs.

About the middle of April I saw them commencing to hang their nests in the manner of our golden Robin, on the pendulous branches of the willow and other trees surrounding the vineyards, and as far as I remained to see them completed, they were made with the same ingenious interweaving of delicate materials to form a pouch.

Agelaius xanthrocephalus, Bonap. Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Abundant in California.

A. phanieus, (Linn.) Vieill. Red winged Blackbird.

Abundant in New Mexico and California.

A. tricolor, Aud. Three colored Blackbird.

This handsome species, discovered by Mr. Nuttall, and sent to Audubon with the above name, is abundant in California, going in small flocks in company with the other species. Its notes are very different from those of the red-wing, with which it associates, being a kind of guttural squeaking, like that made by a dying animal. The red of the wing cannot be seen when they are closed, looking as if it only had a white band.

A. gubernator, (Wagler) Bonap. Two colored Blackbird.

This pretty species is abundant, also, in California, and along the western coast of Mexico. It is often found in company with the *phaniceus*, which it

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so much resembles, together keeping about corrals and places where cattle have been.

ELECTION.

The following gentlemen were elected Members:

David C. Skerrett, M. D., of Philadelphia.

Mr. George Boyd Allinson, “